



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

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October 9, 2018

Hyattsville Teen Convicted in 2017 Shooting death of Laurel Teen

A Hyattsville teen has been convicted in the 2017 drug-related shooting death of a 14-year-old boy. Melvin A. Jacome, 16 of the 6800 block of Ridge Road, was convicted of first-degree murder of Xavier Cole Young of Laurel and additional charges by a Howard County jury following a five-day trial that concluded Friday evening.

Just after 11 p.m. on October 28, 2017, officers responded to an area in the 9000 block of N. Laurel Road after hearing a gunshot while they were on another call. There they discovered Young lying in the street, unconscious and suffering from a critical gunshot wound to the head. He was transported by medevac helicopter to Johns Hopkins Hospital and was pronounced dead two days later. Before the week concluded, Howard County police detectives arrested Jacome, along with another teen and a 19-year-old man.

During the trial, police and eyewitnesses testified that a one-on-one illegal drug transaction went awry when the seller planned to short the buyer of marijuana and the buyer conspired in a plan to rob the seller. Both parties brought along additional youths which made both parties wary of consummating the deal. The buyer, along with Jacome, scuttled their plan, returning to a black sedan where one shot was fired from an open car window as they drove away from a nearby residential community. The seller testified that a green laser brushed across his face shortly before the shot felled his friend, Xavier Young.

The driver of the car, Francisco Rodriguez, 16 of Laurel, testified that it was Jacome who fired the 9mm Kel-Tec pistol equipped with a laser sight which was never recovered. Rodriguez was also initially charged with the murder but testified that prosecutors offered him a plea deal on the lesser charge of conspiracy to commit robbery in exchange for his testimony. Jacome was implicated based on cell phone tower tracking, along with social media photos and videos showing him handling the pistol. Cell phone extractions showed that he texted a friend of plans to participate in a robbery that evening and on the morning after the shooting texted that he had "hit him with a hollow," referring to the hollow-point bullet fired by his gun. A 21-year-old man who lived near Jacome and who temporarily hid the murder weapon testified that on the day after the shooting Jacome told him that "he might have killed somebody the night before."

During closing arguments prosecutors methodically reviewed witness testimony and forensic evidence in support of their case. Jacome's defense attorney characterized the case as "smoke and mirrors" and hit hard at the veracity and character of the eyewitness/participants. Assistant State's Attorney Colleen McGuinn conceded their initial reluctance to tell the truth but told jurors, "A bus full of nuns wasn't driving by a drug deal that night."

The jury deliberated for four hours before returning guilty verdicts on the first-degree murder of Xavier Young, first-degree assault on the seller of the marijuana, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, possession of a regulated firearm by someone under 21, reckless endangerment from a motor vehicle and conspiracy to commit armed robbery. Howard County Circuit Court Judge Richard S. Bernhardt set a sentencing date of December 6. Jacome remains held without bond. Rodriguez will be sentenced on October 10. A third man arrested—Luis Gerardo Ordonez, 19 of Laurel, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit armed robbery and a firearm charge on May 7 and will be sentenced October 18.